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John E. Zercher

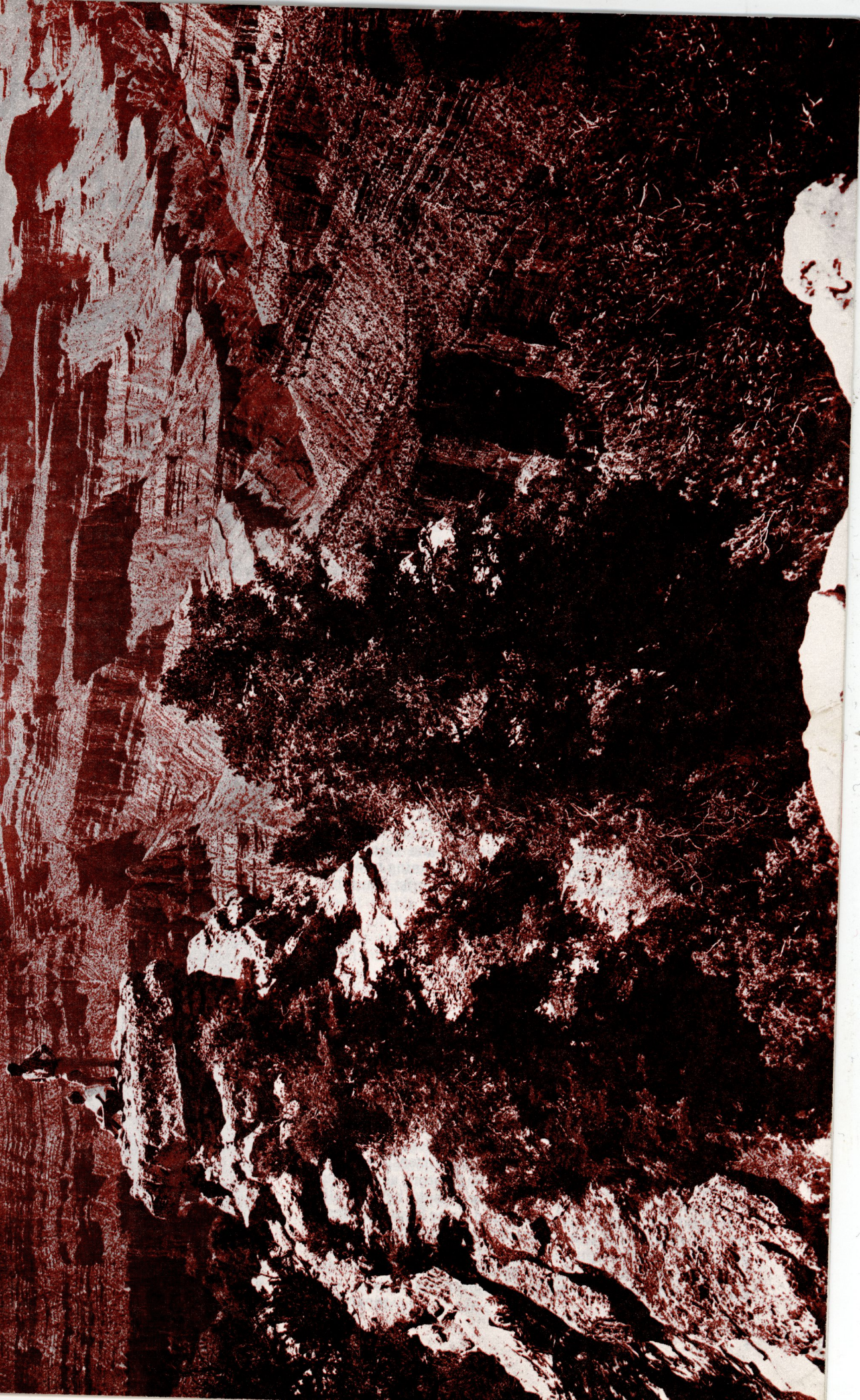
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Evangelical VISITOR

January 25, 1976



General Conference Information

THE General Conference of 1976 will be held on the campus of Azusa Pacific College, Azusa, California, from Saturday afternoon, July 3, to Thursday, July 8, 1976.

Conference members will need to be present for the first business session late Saturday afternoon. Conference leaders are hopeful that General Conference will conclude by noon on July 8, but progress on agenda items will determine adjournment time.

The facilities at Azusa Pacific College (about 25 minutes from Upland) are excellent. All people attending the Conference are invited to stay on the campus throughout the above dates.

Lodging will be available in modern dormitories near the main auditorium. All rooms on the main campus have twin beds. Parents may have children in their rooms without extra charge if no extra beds are needed. The rates are \$2 per person per night for those who stay for five nights and purchase all meals in the college dining room. Otherwise, lodging is \$3 per person per night.

Meals rates are \$5.50 per day in the full-conference, meal and lodging package plan (a total of \$7.50 per day). Purchased otherwise, the rates are: Breakfast, \$1.50; Lunch, \$1.90; and Dinner, \$2.50. No meal discounts for children.

Facilities for campers are somewhat limited. Only units which require no hook-ups can be accommodated. Units needing rest room facilities can camp on the macadam parking lot adjoining a dormitory (no stakes may be driven). Totally self-contained units can park on a grassy area on the upper campus about a mile away. Camping at either place is free.

Unfortunately, no camp sites which accommodate tents or fold-out campers are in the surrounding community. Locations of the nearest ones will be given at a later time. A list of area motels will also be provided.

A four-page form with detailed information will be inserted in a later issue of the *Evangelical Visitor*. For additional information, contact the Convention Director, Paul Hostetler, Grantham, PA 17027. Office phone: 717-766-2511, Ext. 362. Home phone: 717-766-2621.

General Conference has traditionally been a great family experience. With facilities ample, and rates reasonable, families are encouraged to start planning now for this biennial high point of the Brethren in Christ Church.

From the Editor

This issue of the VISITOR has become a very interesting one.

Our beloved brother, recently retired pastor, Paul Nigh, brings greetings to the United States readership on the occasion of the nation's bicentennial. He does it in his own inimitable way. Few of us who claim citizenship in the United States know as much about our history as does our Canadian brother. A sense of history would help us all.

I found the article by Timothy and Anne Smith interesting and stimulating. They sensed the unique combination of biblical insights which is a part of Messiah's heritage. They call upon the college to be stewards of this biblical balance of truth with which it has been entrusted.

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COVER: Bright Angel Point on the Grand Canyon's north rim. Just north of the Grand Canyon National Park in Southwest Utah are Bryce Canyon and Zion National Parks — all on the route west to a family General Conference (a Union Pacific Railroad photograph).

Evangelical Visitor

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The Four-fold Witness

I Corinthians 15:3-8

THE WORD *witness* is a term lightly used and often misunderstood. Its interpretation is sometimes so broad as to include the role of the prosecutor and the judge. Other times it is limited to personal experience, confined to what has happened to the one bearing witness.

In the early verses of Paul's great discourse on the resurrection in II Corinthians 15 he identifies four characteristics of the Christian witness which add wholeness to it.

It is historical. The Christian faith is rooted in history. It is concerned with One who lived in a certain time and place. It is concerned with events that really happened. The Christian faith is anchored in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

When the apostles fulfilled their role as witnesses it was their witness to the resurrection. This Jesus whom the mob had demanded to be crucified God had raised up. Everything was different since that event. These men and women now needed to take a new look at life and their attitudes.

When the foundations are shaken and questions exceed the answers and the spiritual glow of yesterday has passed in the night, it is time to return to the empty tomb and from there begin to put things back together again.

The Christian witness is theological. Now, do not let that word frighten you. It means that the historical event has spiritual meaning. "Christ died for our sins . . . and was raised in accordance with the scriptures." Theology is the biblical meaning of a biblical event or truth, in this case the cross and the resurrection.

The theological part of the Christian witness understands and explains man's need and God's provision. Man's malady is seen in the light of the cross. God's provision is seen in the cross and the empty tomb. It is the obligation of the church to plumb the depths of the meaning of sin and grace of the cross and the resurrection. The source of this meaning is the Scriptures. Our witness needs to include, not only the knowledge of the Scriptures, but their meaning as well.

The Christian witness is experiential. It is born out in the lives of people who commit themselves to the Risen Christ. Christ — the Resurrected Christ — was seen of Peter, the Twelve, five hundred and James. The historical fact and the biblical meaning were supported by personal encounter.

Christ appeared to Peter — boastful, profane, weak, and repentant. He appeared to the twelve — confused and fearful. He walked with two on an afternoon on the road to Emmaus — two who had lost hope.

This Christ still meets men and women in their need. He speaks forgiveness and implants hope. He brings new life and frees the prisoner. The Church of Jesus Christ is part of the Christian witness. The historical fact and the biblical meaning are confirmed in an innumerable host of men and women who have met the Resurrected Christ.

The Christian witness is also personal. Paul writes "... he appeared also to me." This was no second-handed faith for Paul. He too had met the Christ. The encounter on the

Damascus Road made the difference. The rumor of Easter was now a fact of history, confirmed in his own experience.

It continues to be true — the motivation to witness and the credibility of that witness comes from a first-hand faith. It is important to remember that this personal encounter is with the same Christ who appeared to Peter and Paul and the twelve. It is the same Christ who has met Christians during these intervening centuries. It is personal yet within the Christian tradition. It is different yet the same.

We restrict and hinder our witness if we neglect one or more of these aspects of the Christian witness. Our witness needs to be anchored in history; interpreted by Scripture; confirmed in experience; and made credible by a personal encounter with this Christ of history and the Bible.

Z

FROM THE EDITOR

from page two

Neither a Christian college nor a denomination will long endure which chooses to adopt a pattern of bland evangelicalism or the lowest common denominator of Christian doctrine as its theological framework. Both need unifying and distinctive ideals and ideas which express the Christian faith and the Christian life according to their understanding of the Bible. I question if any great movement within the Christian church ever flourished on the basis of deemphasizing distinctives. Rather these movements rallied around a discovery or a rediscovery of a Christian truth which did not detract from the central theme of the gospel but rather high-lighted it.

Thanks to Dr. and Mrs. Smith for reminding us of our opportunity and responsibility.

Just before writing this column I read the copy for the insert on the General Conference travel and hospitality which will appear in a subsequent issue of the VISITOR. I am certain that there will be many from across the church who will wish to be present at this conference and many parents who will wish their families to join them. I am just as certain that many will need to "count the cost."

The article on page 10, "Brethren Inns Along the Way" may say something to those who need to "count the cost." But as the writer points out, there are more benefits than financial to "Brethren-inning." Read it! If this idea seems to make sense to you, fill out the coupon. You will note that the proposal suggests a three year commitment — '76, '77, '78! Remember that although the migration will be west this year, it will be east in '78; and south in the winters and north in the summers. Many strangers may become friends through it all.

God is Not a Reluctant Judge

T. A Hegre

THE PARABLE in Luke 18:1-8 is generally called the parable of the importunate widow. The word "importunate" means unreasonable, troublesome, or begging.

The text begins with the words, "And he spake this parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

Upon reading that statement we may perhaps ask, "How can we always pray? We have so many other things to do we certainly cannot be praying all the time." The apostle Paul once wrote that we are to "pray without ceasing." By this he meant that we must never give up our practice of speaking to God. Apparently this is what Luke means also. Furthermore, he asserts we must not "faint." I assume that this means we should always be in an attitude of prayer. We must always have an inner desire toward God and never be passive or indifferent. Unfortunately, most people are passive. They pray but do not always receive immediate answers, so they simply give up.

Now what about this story? Are we to follow the widow's example? Does the judge represent God and the widow symbolize the believer? Is it really true that God is so unwilling to hear that He will not regard what we say unless we keep begging? Is this what Luke is trying to teach us? Are we to wear down God's resistance until He finally yields to our persistent begging?

Let's investigate the story more closely . . .

The word "parable" means, literally, "to lay along side." A parable is utilized either to *compare* or *contrast* two things. Some do the former. Others do the latter.

The parable in Luke 18 is a *contrast* throughout. This means that God is *not* like the unjust judge. He is pre-

cisely the opposite. The Bible does not teach that God is reluctant to hear and answer us. In fact, it teaches that He is eminently willing to do both.

The judge in this parable is like the paid magistrates hired by Herod or the Romans. They were a notorious lot. Unless a plaintiff had either money or great influence, the judges refused to hear his case. They were called robber judges, and they lived up to their reputation.

In Luke 18 there is no doubt that the widow represents the world's helpless, defenseless and needy. She had no monetary resources whatever. Her only weapon was persistence, and she wielded it well. I don't know whether she actually threatened the judge, but he did become fearful and say, "Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest she 'bruise me.'"

The purpose of this parable is to show us that if an *unjust* judge could be persuaded to grant justice, how much more will a loving heavenly Father gladly help the believer who comes to Him in prayer.

We must never, however, allow ourselves to slander God by unreasonable begging. Such begging implies that we are willing to get help but God is unwilling to supply it.

Jesus ends the story with these words, "Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, that cry to him day and night, and yet he is longsuffering over them? I say unto you, that *he will avenge them speedily.*" Now *that* is what God is like!

There are many people who believe that the more people you can get to pray about a matter the more likely it

is that God will answer. This approach is much like the Tibetan notion, except that the Tibetans have automated it. They write prayers on pieces of paper, hang them on branches, windmills and water wheels, and believe that every breath of wind which moves the papers repeats the prayers.

Now, it is *not* repetition that makes earnest prayer, or causes God to hear and answer. In fact, Jesus told us we should *avoid* such repetition. He pointed out that the heathen think they will be heard *because of their repetitions*, and that Christians are not to approach God with that attitude.

Now, there are different kinds of prayer. There is the petitionary prayer which properly ends with, "if it be thy will." Jesus himself prayed that way when He said, "Not my will, but thine, be done!"

But, there is a second type of petition. It is the kind of request we are to make when we *do* know the will of God. In such cases Jesus told us, "Whatever you ask the Father in my name I will give it you." Of course, we must be certain that we do, indeed, know the will of God before we can get the benefits of this "ask anything" kind of praying.

Amy Carmichael, the great missionary to India, once requested that God turn her eyes from brown to blue. She was very disappointed when it failed to happen. But many years later she saw the wisdom of God in giving her brown eyes. Her eye coloring, combined with the flowing Indian sari she wore, enabled her to slip undetected into Hindu temples and rescue thousands of baby girls who were being raised to become religious prostitutes. Had her eyes been blue the priests would have known at once that she was an intruder.

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Evangelical Visitor

There is benefit in "seeing ourselves as others see us" and to view a scene from a perspective. One of our brethren, a northern neighbor, congratulates the United States on its Bicentennial.

Internationally Speaking

Paul A. Nigh

MAY I offer congratulations to the American people on the occasion of your United States bicentennial. This I do because we be brethren. Our national boundary is a geographic and theoretical division; but the Stars and Stripes and the Maple Leaf both flutter in the same breeze.

As Canadians and Americans we are the world's best friends and neighbors. This is a fact in spite of childish animosities and petulant actions that afflict our relationships on occasion. We are well aware that the warmth of American economic suns will warm Canadian hearths. And perchance scudding clouds of adversity darken the domain of the eagle they soon cast a shadow over the land of the maple leaf. Our joys and sorrows are quite common.

If we walk the corridors of history and observe the course of nations, violence is one common denominator. In the year 1066 the battle of Hastings was a turning point in British history. The invading forces of William, duke of Normandy, were victorious over Harold, king of England. One historian writes, of this epic conflict, that it was, "one of those battles which at rare intervals have decided the fate of nations."

In 1759 on the plains of Abraham, above Quebec city, defending French forces under General Montcalm were put to the worse by British troops commanded by General Wolfe. That battle changed the course of Canadian history.

As the Pilgrim Fathers disembarked at Plymouth in 1620 they little dreamed that within one hundred and fifty-five years their posterity would be locked in mortal combat with the land of their ancestry. After six years of conflict the guns of victor and vanquished fell silent and independence became a reality. The course of history was altered.

But I presume that in the flush of victory the dark shadow did not fall

across this fledgling nation that within eighty years their new country would suffer the devastations of one of the most sanguinary civil wars in the annals of history. But so it was, and for our long years fratricide strife wounded the land.

I am a Canadian. It may well be that some of my ancestors emigrated because of fealty to the British crown. I do not know. This is not important to me. Sufficient it is that I am a loyal Canadian today. As I peruse the pages of history a mental picture is presented to my mind. Do I thrill as leaden slugs from British muskets, in one united volley, pierce the breasts of French soldiers in 1759? In the somewhat complex causes, victories, and results of the war of 1812-1814 between Canada and the United States, do I rejoice because I am yet a Canadian by force of arms?

You are Americans because two hundred years ago your fathers said, "No," to the imperious demands of an intransigent monarch of England, King George III. Is it with a sense of pride that you turn the chronicled pages from Lexington in 1775 to Yorktown in 1781 and in final view the capitulation of British General Cornwallis at this Virginia town after years of bitter struggle? Does the dreadful panorama of battles between northern Union troops and their southern slaveholding secessionist kin, fought with such ferocity of courage that a stream between the two, on one occasion, ran red with brothers' blood, ring a patriotic bell in your soul? If our answer to any of these questions is other than "No," we need a talk with the Prince of Peace.

As people of peace we do well not to be caught in the maelstrom of national pride that glorifies the smoking gun or flashing sword or dripping bayonet as a symbol of freedom from oppression. Bear clearly in mind that the young men who are casualties in battle suffer equally whether they are victor or vanquished. The sighs of the widows and orphans are just as poignant for both victorious or defeated foes. But here the tenuous posture of logic presents itself: Does not the end justify the means employed?

In all the affairs of men we must ever recognize the supreme sovereignty of God. This fact was learned by the Babylonian monarch in Daniel 5:21, "The most high God ruled in the kingdoms of men. And that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will." And the apostle Paul enunciates in Acts 17:21, "And hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation."

But within the perimeter of the sovereign prerogatives of the Judge of all the earth the self-determination of man is allowed to direct his own course within prescribed limits. Thus the course that man may take is not necessarily the plan that God would use if men were not hasty to wrath. The unleashing of the dogs of war is always a judgment on all concerned; for suffering is common to conqueror and conquered. The American Civil War is a case in point. For the victorious north suffered nearly twice the casualties of defeated Confederate forces (634,000 and 358,000 respectively).

There is no doubt that the Righteous Arbiter of human actions had decreed that slavery should be no more in the land of the free. But if the nations would have turned to God instead of the sword she might have been spared the agony of conflict. Perhaps a few more dynamic preachers like Henry Ward Beecher and writers as Harriet Beecher Stowe would have been more effective than four million men in gory holocaust; and the victory less inconclusive for following generations.

The strength of any nation is measured by the comprehensive words of Scripture, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." This irrevocable law of God is timeless in power and effect. The children of Israel were not allowed possession of their promised land for centuries, because, "The iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full." Imperial Rome, whose legions marched with a conquering tread, was a mighty power for many years. She was brought to the dust, not by the Carthaginians, or war-like tribes from the north; but by her own moral decay. In the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* the author alludes to immoral conditions and then declares, "The sands of Rome were running out." Thus God honors even nominal morality, and judges the inverse.

I presume that the American people today represent the greatest national conglomerate of any nation known to history. The invitation inscribed on the Statue of Liberty has not gone un-

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The writer has recently retired as pastor of the Springvale and Cheapside congregations, Canadian Conference. Brother Nigh also had a ministry to the Indians living in the area (see page fourteen).

Reflections on a Week at Messiah College

Timothy and Anne Smith

WE ENJOYED four days at Messiah College at the end of October, working as a team — one of us voluble and the other one acting as a sidelines superintendent — filling the Thomas F. Staley Distinguished Scholar lectureship for the current year. Since Tim's field is American religious history, which he teaches and directs research in at the Johns Hopkins University, and Anne's is that of a professional pastor's wife, we were naturally greatly concerned for much else besides the intellectual response to Tim's lectures on "bicentennial" themes: (American peoplehood; Religion in the Foundation of the American Nation; and Christian perfection in Nineteenth-Century American Culture).

What we were interested in most was the intellectual and religious life of the community of faculty and students at Messiah College. We had been there only once before, for commencement in 1971, but had off and on met persons like Martin Schrag and Ron Sider, through their activities on behalf of the cause of peace and social concern, and had become acquainted with Bishop Henry Ginder when he preached at our church on the campus of Eastern Nazarene College.

Having seen at close range many other Christian college campuses our overwhelming impression of Messiah is of an institution carefully administered, enjoying a beautiful and well-maintained campus, and a faculty which combines scholarship, piety and lots of good sense. Tim spoke in a half dozen classes as well as in chapel on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Then on Tuesday we had a most inspiring day at the Philadelphia campus, meeting Ron Sider's two classes and preaching at the evening chapel over which our esteemed friend, Abraham Davis, presides. As people always expect Tim to do, he combined preaching and lecturing on American religious history with his continuing emphasis upon the relevance of the

Wesleyan message of Christian holiness to both modern thought and social problems and to the aspirations of young people for personal sanctity.

Tim felt an especially keen sense of identity with the Brethren in Christ because, when returning from our trip last winter to the Holy Land, he had in a most remarkable way found himself converted to radical pacifism. He had always felt great sympathy with this position but had never been able to come to it himself, from either logic or biblical conviction. During that trip he had reread some of the literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and pondered the rival perfectionist piety which Jesus rebuked in the lives of the Pharisees, the "holy ones" of long ago. The conviction suddenly dawned upon him that when Jesus said, "Ye have heard that it hath been said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," and commanded non-resistance, he was setting his kingdom off in sharp contrast to that which the Qumran community anticipated. Their writings about the Last Days pictured the children of light taking the sword to the children of darkness to prepare the way for the Messiah. Jesus called us to peace and love. His kingdom comes not by swords but by crosses. And in this life, the crowns are all made of thorns.

We spent the week at Messiah, then, in thought, conversation, and prayer, and saw it come to a spiritual climax in discussions of the relevance of Christian perfection and the irrelevance of glossolalia.

Two other impressions remain powerful as we reflect upon this first real acquaintance with the college and its sponsoring communion. The first is the great diversity in the denominational backgrounds of the student body. Accustomed as we are to Nazarene institutions where faculties and students come overwhelmingly from the sponsoring denomination, we were surprised to find that only one in five of the students at Messiah were from Brethren in Christ churches. The remainder represent as broad a variety of old and new communions — Wesleyan, Baptist, Presbyterian, Lu-

theran, and Anabaptist — as we have found on any campus in the country.

Diversity has its benefits. We rarely encountered students reacting unthinkingly toward the gospel just because it was the belief of the denomination which sponsors the college. No one complained of religious coercion. And, quite amazingly, it seemed to us that every student bowed his or her head for grace at the table, in silent and obviously entirely voluntary recognition that His presence at Messiah was part of a larger search to know and do the will of God. A sizable number were associated in one way or another with the modern charismatic movement, if we may judge from the intense but respectful manner in which they received and responded to Tim's efforts to explain his noncharismatic Wesleyanism, and to show why he believed the so-called "unknown tongue" was both scripturally and rationally a confusing error. Even in that discussion, however, a deep sensitiveness prevailed, reminding us that the Spirit of the Lord does make God's children reverent towards one another.

What concerned us about the diversity, however, was the growing awareness that the theological and spiritual unity of the Brethren in Christ themselves has fallen somewhat under tension. Friends spoke of the pull on one hand toward the older "anabaptist" traditions which stress holiness through discipleship, communal solidarity, and ethical commitment to peace and social concern, and, on the other hand, toward the Wesleyan gospel of Christian perfection which entered deeply into the life of the Brethren around the turn of this century. It is no news, of course, that members of the communion are keenly aware of these separate traditions, and conscious of the differences between them. Having spent the week reading Alderfer's dissertation on "The Mind of the Brethren in Christ" however, Tim came away with a deep feeling that Wesleyanism became a part of the life of the Brethren not by denying central aspects of the Ana-

Dr. Timothy Smith is a member of the faculty, Johns Hopkins University. He and his wife are members of the Church of the Nazarene.

baptist tradition, but by affirming them. What the holiness movement added was the conviction that the Holy Spirit would and did sanctify believers by faith, in a second crisis of Christian experience which would quicken their devotion to discipline, sustain their growth in Christlikeness, and confirm their commitment to the holy way of brotherhood and peace.

On the last day, therefore, we shared with several of our new acquaintances a second major impression, which we want also to state here. We observed that what the college needed perhaps, most, was to encourage the development among the leadership group in administration, faculty, and college church of a conscious and explicit commitment to uphold in all their beauty and power BOTH the Anabaptist and the Wesleyan traditions — to sustain them by biblical and other studies, and to declare them lovingly and faithfully to students and in-coming faculty and staff alike. For the immense impact of your small communion on American evangelicalism, on one hand, and on the several larger Wesleyan denominations on the other, through the witness of several of your leaders to both peace and perfect love, is a cause for thanksgiving. Such a leadership group, banded together in just such a corporate devotion, might become one of modern Christianity's great catalysts of commitment, designed by the Lord himself to call us all to clearer understanding of the Scriptures and more complete obedience to Christ. A committed company, not organized ecclesiastically so much as spiritually, and not acting by pressure but by witness and personal examples of thoughtful godliness, would give a sense of direction to the whole college community. Students, especially, need this kind of loom, I think, on which to weave the tapestry of their own personal faith and commitment.

On a Christian college campus, the Holy Spirit's leadership rests in the fellowship of the committed. Those who share that fellowship stand in loving responsibility for the whole community in much the same manner the apostles shared together, in faith and humility, the leadership of the Christian community at Jerusalem in the years following Pentecost.

So, with this hope in our hearts, and the memory of many fine conversations, we took our leave with both prayer and faith that the Lord's work would continue to be done through the ministry of Messiah College to its faculty and staff and their families, and to the students who year by year come to this beautiful place.

January 25, 1976

Religious News

Pennsylvania Amish and Mennonites Buying One-Room Schoolhouses

As fast as the Pennsylvania public schools phase them out, Old Order Amish and Mennonites are buying up one-room schoolhouses, in which to continue their traditional forms of education.

According to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the number of Amish parochial schools in Lancaster County — an Amish center — has doubled since 1968, from 31 to 62, with enrollment nearly 4,000.

Besides buying up abandoned one-room schools at auction, the Amish are building new ones. Also about 10 new teachers were added this year according to Andrew Kinsinger, superintendent of Amish Parochial Schools in Pennsylvania.

In most ways, however, the Amish schools remain unchanged. Girls in ankle-length dresses, boys in black trousers and long-sleeved shirts with suspenders sit by grade in tight rows of iron and wood desks.

Amish teachers, themselves educated only to the eighth grade, emphasize the three Rs, plus honesty, thriftiness, discipline and cleanliness.

Purdue Professor Challenges "Just War" Theory

Since the time of Augustine, Christians generally have gone along with every war their particular Caesar called for, but "Christians were not always violent," declares William R. Durland, chairman of the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Purdue University, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Directing his comments particularly at Roman Catholic theologians, Durland, in a book, *No King but Caesar?* says Roman Catholics are wrong in their "just war" theory. His words were addressed originally to the 1971 International Synod of Bishops meeting in Rome on issues of peace and justice.

Commenting on the book, John L. McKenzie, professor of De Paul University, Chicago, said, "It is difficult to answer the cynic who says the Christians were lovers of peace until they became a majority." McKenzie supports Durland's thesis without reservation.

Durland holds that "Christian non-violence is much like the three great virtues of faith, hope and love. To believe in non-violence takes faith, to practice it demands love and to follow through with it requires hope.

World's People Living in Freedom Were Reduced by 40% in '75

The number of people in the world living in a democratic society reportedly dropped by 40 percent in 1975 — the sharpest dip recorded by Freedom House since it began assessing the trend 24 years ago.

Freedom House, an independent organization devoted to the strengthening of free societies, said its 20-foot "map of freedom" has been "darkened as never before." The map depicts free nations in white, partly free in grey and the not free in black.

Led by India with 619.6 million citizens, eight nations with a combined population of 743.2 million experienced sharp declines in freedom as measured by the Freedom House ratings. Freedom expanded in only five nations in 1975, with 60 million citizens.

The 1975 Comparative Survey of Freedom lists 57 nations with 803.6 million population as Free, 84 nations with 1,435.8 million people as Partly Free, and 68 nations with 1,823.4-million people as Not Free.

This means 19.8 percent of the world's population is now living in freedom, 35.3 percent are partly free and 44.9 percent are not free.

"Evangelicals' Unity Crumbling," Carl Henry Observes in Essays

American evangelicals show signs of a crumbling unity and are losing some of the high momentum they displayed a decade ago, Dr. Carl F. H. Henry observes in a series of essays prepared for *Christianity Today*.

Evangelicals, says Dr. Henry in the monthly series titled "Footnotes" beginning Jan. 16, are now forfeiting "unprecedented opportunities for impressive impact on the American scene."

In the series, which Word Books will later issue as a book titled, *Evangelicals in Search of Identity*, Dr. Henry notes that "after the mid-century rise of the Graham crusades evangelical Christianity emerged into the religious scene . . . like a young lion with amazing energies. . . . The lion is increasingly unsure of its identity" and has become "a lion on the loose that nobody fears."

UCC Journal Sees Quinlan Case Spurring Legal, Moral Issues

The Karen Ann Quinlan case has helped focus international attention on the ethical, social and legal questions raised by modern medical developments, according to a United Church of Christ journal.

"Ethics is no longer a luxury which may accompany good medicine. Today it is essential to the practice of medicine in its simplest and most ordinary sense," said Dr. Robert M. Veatch, a contributor to the magazine's special issue.

United Synagogue Moves Toward Formal Affiliation With Zionism

The Conservative Jewish movement in the U.S. has moved toward formal affiliation with the World Zionist Organization "as a repudiation of the United Nations resolution equating Zionism with racism."

"The time has arrived for the Conservative Movement to identify itself formally with the World Zionist Organization and thus reaffirm the indivisibility of the Land of Israel and Judaism," said Rabbi Bernard Segal, executive vice-president of the United Synagogue of America.

The Freeing o

Paul S

PART ONE

FOR PEOPLE who have mission hang-ups there's nothing like a good dose of the Book of Acts. In his "Translator's Preface" to Acts J. B. Phillips wrote:

... this surely is the Church as it was meant to be. It is vigorous and flexible, for these are the days before it ever became fat and short of breath through prosperity, or muscle-bound by overorganization.

Last summer, at a large missionary meeting in England, I heard the Rev. John V. Taylor, until recently the general secretary of the Church Missionary Society and now the Bishop of Winchester, tell of a day when he, as a young man, stood up to signify that he was a missionary volunteer. He soon developed a fixation on a certain country in Africa where he wanted to serve. As it turned out, he lived to see the hand of God in his being assigned to another country. "I was hooked on *geography*," said the bishop, "and God was interested in *availability*."

Availability

This is one of the guidelines that appear repeatedly in Acts. Consider what happened in the church at Antioch:

While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off (13:2-3, RSV).

Did they go armed with a manual of strategy? Not at all. Think of all the things which, at that point, they did not know: (1) how the issue would be resolved as to whether Gentiles would be required to become Jews (be circumcised) in order to be accepted as

Christians, (2) that Peter would turn out to be eminently the apostle to the Jews while Paul, with even greater eminence, would be the apostle to the Gentiles, (3) that Paul would attempt an evangelizing foray first into Asia and then into Bithynia, only to have the Holy Spirit veto both plans (16:6-7) and (4) that when the second proposal was aborted, the arrival in Troas would become the scene of that momentous vision in response to which the gospel for the first time would spill over into Europe.

What if Paul had been hung up on geography? It was his flexibility and availability that the Spirit of God used to carry the good news of Jesus to those areas where its impact would be the greatest.

The fixed models and methods of missions so familiar in the last half of the 19th century and up to the time of World War I, began to come apart at the seams after the guns of August 1914 broke loose. With the Second World War, the collapse of colonialism and the sealing off of China, missionaries by the thousands had to be regrouped, retrained and redeployed. We are now much nearer the pattern of fluidity that we see in first-century missions. Thus it comes to pass that availability is one of the benchmarks of today's missionary.

Speciality

To those who consult him, Webster suggests that "speciality" means "a particular aptitude or skill; a special occupation." Availability and mobility for their own sakes are never enough. There must be a zeroing in at this point or the other. Thus by the

Holy Spirit's use of events Paul was given a special mission to the Gentiles, though this did not exclude his continuing concern for the Jewish community. The day came when the Jews in Pisidian Antioch turned violently against the gospel. It was a signal to Paul, to which he responded by saying:

... "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles" (13:46, RSV).

We must see that the other, and complementary, side of availability is particularity. It was Paul's speciality to strike out for the important centers of population and plant a church there; to put great trust in the new converts and rapidly develop them into servant-leaders; to break the rhythm of his rushing itinerating by spending a long time in building up a congregation which he felt would carry strategic responsibilities; to support himself by tent-making (even while subscribing to the principle of congregational support for pastors) when this could be used as a sign to certain kinds of unbelievers.

From availability to speciality is a flow of action needed now. It may take place through pre-service training or through inservice insights and discipline. If it doesn't take place, there will be a lot of sterility over which to weep.

To finish where we began, the Book of Acts offers us a priceless antidote for old hang-ups. It is a peerless summons to freedom of action under the guidance and control of the Holy Spirit.

Evangelical Visitor

the Hang-Up

PART TWO

PART 1 began with a lively quotation about Acts from J. B. Phillips. Our borrowing this time is from G. Campbell Morgan. This is from the foreword of the more than 500 pages he wrote in exposition of the Acts of the Apostles:

My own work on the story has impressed me with the glorious regularity of the irregular in the work of the Church by the Holy Spirit. It is a powerful argument against the stereo-typed in Christian organization and method; and consequently a plea for room for the operation of that Spirit, who, like the wind, bloweth where He listeth.

One is pleasantly stung by that phrase "the glorious regularity of the irregular." Isn't that what we see in this thrilling chronicle's throbbing midsection (chapters 13-16) at which we were looking last time?

The Christians we watched in mission — senders such as the Antioch congregation, goers such as Paul and Barnabas — were characterized by *availability* and *speciality*. They were not slaves to a plan; they were responders to opportunity. The particularities of guidance were as real to them as their basic availability for mission and witness.

Community

Something else is discoverable from the record. It was their concern for community. Instead of being an aggregation of loners, they were a congregation of partners. A "worshipping" community of Christians in Antioch gave their blessing and commission to a witnessing couple (Barnabas and Saul) who then under God turned "mission impossible" into mission accomplished in place after place.

In all of this action what is toweringly significant is the strong sense of community that held together (1) the senders, (2) the sent and (3) those who

became Christians as a consequence. The sending was a community action, the going was a community response, and the resultant converts were brought into a community experience.

In 19th and 20th century missions we have had some continuity with this New Testament pattern, but we have had far too many deviations from it. Occasionally a group has been justified in withdrawing its right hand of fellowship by basic theological betrayal. But rarely! All too often it has been for reasons neither cogent nor compelling. Sometimes, one fears, not even honest!

The result? With dismay a leading Christian national in Assam (India) complained, "We are now more denominationally minded than our missionary fathers. Before they came we were divided into tribes; now we are divided into our denominations — Methodist, Presbyterians, Baptists and so forth."

It should be remembered that denominational tribalism can be, and sometimes has been, as collectively self-centered, competitive and contentious as cultural and anthropological tribalism. The crowning irony may be seen when groups calling themselves interdenominational (or non-denominational) take the field, flaunting their separatistic distinctives so aggressively that the wider "communion of saints" is largely obscured by the competitiveness of societies. Gently let it be said that this is not the way they view themselves. It is the way they are viewed by non-Christians at home and by many Christian nationals overseas.

In the world of mission if you wish to see complacency over dividedness, look at American Christianity; if you wish to find the hunger for commun-

ity look at the overseas nationals. Like all generalizations, this one is vulnerable, but it's safer than most.

Applicability

The "in" world would be *relevancy*. Because it is to overworked, we give it a rest here. By whatever term we characterize it, what we see in the Acts record is the willingness of Paul and his colleagues to be involved in forms of action that challenged society's entrenched evils.

Take, for example, the account in chapter 16 of Paul's exorcising the demon from a defenseless "slave girl" whose owners were exploiting her — and a superstitious public as well — for monetary gain. What really landed Paul and Silas in jail was not the healing of the girl but the damage done to the profits of the owners and schemers.

If the central word of the gospel is reconciliation, the involved word of the gospel is confrontation. The "principalities and powers" are not to be condoned by a pious acquiescence. They are to be challenged by word and act. The hard-hitting "Hal" Luccock once wrote: "Jesus was not crucified for saying, 'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow'; He was crucified for saying, 'Consider the thieves of the temple, how they steal!'" Yet even Luccock was not entirely correct. It was not what Jesus *said* about corruption that infuriated the bigwigs who ran the power-structure; it was what he *did* about it.

Availability! Speciality! Community! Applicability! Here are four calls and concepts that fairly explode from the Acts of the Apostles. They shake our current hang-ups. They are a summons to greater freedom.

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Brethren Inns Along the Way

CAN A family of five, living on a modest income, afford a traveling vacation if it means a week of sleeping in motels? "Only with shrewd budgeting and some belt-tightening at mealtimes," reports Leon Stauffer, General Secretary of Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions in Salunga, Pennsylvania, who made the trip to the Mennonite Church Assembly '75 in Eureka, Illinois last summer, a family vacation. "Nancy and I wanted our children (sons Brian and Chad, and daughter Kim) to experience the church meeting but spending up to \$30 a night for beds almost made us reconsider."

The end of the story? "Our family found something for everyone at Assembly, and I began thinking about reviving an old tradition among our people called 'Mennoniting Your Way Along.' I'd like to see if we could organize that old hospitality so as we travel we could learn to know other families in the brotherhood, and of course, make vacations a less expensive proposition." "An excellent proposition for single folks as well," Stauffer added.

Could the idea work? If enough families and individuals participate, a directory could be compiled and distributed to others within the brotherhood, choosing to travel the hospitality way. Stauffer decided to take his proposal to the church, informally. Brethren in Christ Church leader, Arthur M. Climenhaga responded, "I personally react favorably and would encourage you to proceed. . . ."

"What we need to do," explained Stauffer, "is gather basic information from interested households about their accommodations; then put our little program together before this summer when many will be taking extended vacations." Stauffer has gathered a committee to help implement the idea. To work, "Mennonite-Your-Way" needs response from two camps — those looking for hospitality, and those giving it.

Those who want to be hosts need only to have an extra bed or a parking space for a camper or tent, and of course be interested in fellowship. Travelers, as well, choose fellowship when cooperating. Families deciding to be hosts must submit basic information about themselves and their facilities by February 15 to "Mennonite-Your-Way," Box 1525, Salunga, PA 17538 (see coupon on opposite page)). Then a directory will be issued in the spring of 1976, listing participating host Mennonite families across Canada and the U.S.

The writer is the General Secretary of the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions, Salunga, Pa.



The Leon Stauffer family planning their trip. Left to right: Nancy, Kim, Chad, Brian, and Leon. Photo by Dave Fretz.

The directory will catalog host names, address, phone, other family information, and indicate the type of accommodation (spare bed, basement, parking space for camper, etc.) available, as well as the number of people which can be accommodated. Host families will be listed geographically by location in province or state (central Kansas, southern Manitoba, etc.). "We're still dreaming about what else may be in the directory," stated Stauffer. "We'd like to include a calendar of major church events, maps showing points of interest our people would not want to miss, and some Travel Tips for a Menno Life Style."

When prepared, directories will be issued to hosts, and to travelers requesting them. Procedure will then be for travelers to contact host families directly in advance of arrival to secure accommodations, receive travel directions and other details. It will be suggested that the traveler leave a \$2 donation with the host.

Host families joining "Mennonite-Your-Way" should plan to participate for three years, through 1978. "1976, '77, and '78 are big travel years for Mennonites and Brethren in Christ," adds Stauffer. "The bicentennial will find many of our people on the road, and of course, 1978 is the year of Mennonite World Conference in Kansas. I hope we can resurrect some lively hospitality, warm sharing, and a growing sense of brotherhood." (1976 and 1978 are travel years for the Brethren in Christ with General Conference in California in 1976 and the 200th Observation at Messiah College in 1978. Editor) Reflected Stauffer, "Our hosting idea is not designed to undermine motel business, nor are we trying to show up those people who prefer privacy to socializing. We're simply attempting to get willing parties together, and encourage fellowship and economic travel. We're going carefully since this project has no financial support, except for those people participating in it."

Families interested in being hosts in "Mennonite-Your-Way" should complete the coupon below and return it with \$2 toward the cost of printing the directory, no later than February 15.

NOTE: See coupon on facing page.

Thrift Shop Has Two-fold Ministry

Souderton, Pa. — On November 3 the Care and Share Thrift Shop opened for business. The store which sells used and nearly new clothing, household items and self-help materials is located in the Souderton, Pa., shopping center and is sponsored by the more than 40 Mennonite and Brethren in Christ congregations of the area.

One might well ask why are these churches which relate to the Mennonite Central Committee operating a thrift-shop? Couldn't the same merchandise be given to MCC?

MCC cannot use many of the clothes contributed by churches in the United States in many parts of the world — especially in tropical countries and in those countries where the style of the clothes needs to be very functional.

A double-knit shirt or a cashmere and wool business suit is not too functional if those are the only garments one owns and if one works in the rice fields of Bangladesh. If, however, the used clothing and household goods are converted into cash, MCC can purchase more functional materials for the people of the developing world.

There are now 20 thrift shops operated by the MCC constituency in the United States and Canada. The Souderton store is one more effort in the process of converting our unneeded materials into cash for "feeding the hungry and clothing the naked" which is one of the primary obligations of the gospel.

The Care and Share Thrift Shop has a second and equally important focus. It provides the churches of the area an opportunity to fulfill an important social ministry in the community by providing good quality but inexpensive clothes and household goods for those in the local communities who could possibly not afford new things.

The Thrift Shop in Souderton, staffed by volunteers from the local congregations, will be a place where people from the community can be met and personal relationships established, making the shop a combined service and mission effort.

The idea for the shop began with a small informal Sunday evening meeting at the home of Robert Kratz, the

chairman of the Franconia Conference Mission Commission. Those who met felt that the idea of a thrift shop should be pursued.

Last August Janet Vincent, president of the Franconia Conference WMSC, along with her husband, Norman, visited operating thrift shops in Phoenix, Ariz.; Winnipeg, Man., and Toronto/Kitchener, Ont. The report they brought back was overwhelmingly positive.

A small committee of representatives from the Mennonite Church, General Conference Mennonite Church and the Brethren in Christ Church heard the Vincents' report of the many other successful thrift shops and felt the time was right to move ahead with such a shop in the eastern Pennsylvania area.

With the Vincents' leadership in less than two months — along with much

volunteer labor and gifts-in-kind from the Mennonite carpenters, plumbers, electricians, glass shops and janitorial services — the Roxy Drug Store was refurbished and equipped for a thrift shop operation.

Located within 500 yards of the Franconia Conference Center and next door to the Souderton Provident Book Store, it appears to be an almost ideal location. The owners of the shopping plaza have also made the facility available at considerably less than the commercial rent.

The shop is doing well, reporting receipts above \$6,000 since it opened on November 3. All receipts above expenses are channeled to the Mennonite Central Committee and then into materials to feed the hungry and clothe the naked in our needy world.

—MCC Release

CUT AND MAIL

We would like to serve as hosts in "Mennonite-Your-Way." We understand our commitment to extend from June 1976 through September 1978. We would like to be listed in the directory, knowing that all arrangements will be made directly between us and the travelers.

Name _____

Address _____, Zip _____

Phone _____

Available Accommodations:

_____ extra bedroom for _____ people

_____ space for a camper, tent

_____ other (explain) _____

Family Information:

Children _____; Ages _____; Occupation of husband _____

Occupation of wife _____; Family hobbies _____

Home congregation _____

Return this form to: Mennonite-Your-Way, Box 1525, Salunga, PA 17538 and enclose \$2 toward the cost of printing the directory. Return by February 15.

Who Then is Willing?

John Ebersole

"Love is an activity, not a passion . . . its essence is to 'labor,' 'to make someone grow.' To love a person productively implies to care and to feel responsible for his life, growth and the development of all his human powers." — *Eric Fromm*

"I believe in you. You have the gifts and abilities for this situation. And remember, I'm behind you and praying for you." It was these sentiments that a church leader communicated to me as I began a voluntary service assignment.

Right out of college, I was young, inexperienced, and not always ready or willing to conform to the traditional patterns. And yet this church leader saw more possibility in me than I perceived in myself.

In that assignment I made plenty of mistakes. My inexperience and lack of wisdom were readily apparent. This church leader, however, never treated me with condescension or disdain because I was young. Instead he supported me with his love and counsel. He gave me insights and suggestions that helped me grow as a Christian and as a person. He encouraged me in the difficult spots and complimented me when I had done well.

I am certain that I have grown as a Christian and as a member of the body of Christ because many people have seen that one of the greatest needs in the church is to *build people*.

Building church buildings or increasing attendance is in a sense easier than building people. In order to build a church building certain steps need to be taken. A blueprint must be drawn up; funds must be raised; a contractor hired; and the building built. When the building is completed everyone can see that the goal has been achieved.

However, building people is a much longer and more difficult process. People never finish growing. Our responsibility to our brothers and sisters in Christ never ceases. And there are no easy methods or formulas that will guarantee that people will grow.

The difficulties involved in people-building must never discourage Christians from participating. One of our responsibilities as members of the body of Christ is to help other members of the body grow and develop their spiritual gifts.

The Spirit has given each member in the body of Christ at least one gift. Different gifts are given to different persons. Each gift is important. No matter how little ability persons might have or how insignificant their gifts might appear, those persons and their ministries are essential to the life and health of the body. (See I Corinthians 12:14ff)

At certain points I have heard people say — "If only the Smiths wouldn't be a part of our congregation, then we could really get moving." Or, "Johnny Jones shouldn't be given responsibility. He is too young and inexperienced. He really hasn't found himself yet." I must admit that I have also had these feelings about people.

What would happen if we would adopt the apostle Paul's viewpoint? "We cannot get along without the parts of the body that seem to be weaker, and these parts that we think aren't worth very much are the ones which we treat with greater care; while the parts of the body which don't look very nice receive special attention" (I Corinthians 12:22-23 TEV).

Paul himself had been the recipient of this kind of care. After he had been converted he began to preach in Damascus. He barely escaped with his life.

He then went to Jerusalem to join the disciples. But they didn't believe that he was truly a disciple. Perhaps some wanted to wait until Paul "proved" himself. Perhaps they wanted to wait until Paul changed some of his habits.

However, there was one among the number who saw in Paul a diamond in the rough. Barnabas was a people-builder. He saw possibilities in Paul that others could not see. Barnabas was the one who came to Paul's help and took him to the apostles (Acts 9:26-28).

Later on, it was Barnabas who was called to train the new converts in Antioch. Barnabas went and sought out Paul to go with him. For a whole year the two met with the new converts to train them (Acts 11:22-26).

Someone has said that equipping the saints is not a luxury—it's a necessity for survival. The ministry of Barnabas must be one of the highest priorities in the church today. The building up of people in the church is a holy calling. "Who then is willing?"

The author is the Associate Director of the Board of Christian Education.

Who then is willing?

- to identify and prepare persons in their congregation for Christian service, especially for agricultural, community development and public health work
- to help children and youth cultivate Christlike care for others and commitment to their biblical and Anabaptist heritage
- to find ways to free family, friends or self to share faith and skills through church service programs

Mennonite Central Committee
21 South 12th Street
Akron, PA 17501
or
201-1483 Pembina Highway
Winnipeg, Man. R3T 2C8



heeded, "'Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!' Cries she with silent lips. 'Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door.'"

This very magnanimity of an open door may have been a factor in domestic turbulence that has not been foreign to most periods of American history.

I am not a sociologist, but it appears difficult for people who have been oppressed to properly handle freedom. It is ironical that the very founders of the land of the free, and who had fled from unpleasant conditions, themselves became oppressive bigots. It is not a pleasant historical fact that leaders with unrighteous piety persecuted Quakers and put so-called witches to death, encouraged by some preachers of the day. Malcontents, whether social, political or economic are not always easy to change into gentle lambs by the fold of freedom. Most of course do change: but some still bare the fangs of wolves.

With all these involved factors the

United States of America, in the crucible of her culture, has fused together the most affluent nation in the world. On this great hour of national rejoicing for two centuries of national entity every American knee should bow to the sovereign God who has permitted you comparative tranquility in a troublous world. And while in this humble posture a deep searching of the nation's soul in relation to moral and spiritual values would not be amiss.

The United States has enjoyed an illustrious sojourn among the nations of the world. When your constitution was framed by your fathers it was a masterpiece, later declared by an eminent British prime minister to be the greatest document ever struck from the brain of man. Whence comes your greatness and by what means will it be maintained? Will you flourish by the power of military machinations? Will you prosper because your wealth is great? I tell you, nay! For nations do not rise and fall by the sword, nor are measured by the gold and silver in their coffers.

O, United States of America! in the days when nations are crumbling and names and boundaries are rapidly changing, your geography remains inviolate. The incursion of plundering

adversaries has not touched your soil. The American eagle still soars high among the nations of the world. Your fields are fruitful and harvests bounteous. The increase of your flocks and herds is more than enough. You are one of the few major food-exporting countries in all the world. Few, if any, nations there are who have not been touched by the wealth of your economy. The largess of your philanthropies have been surpassed by none.

In addition to this your nation's friendship with the Jewish people is no small entry on the credit side of your national ledger. American soil is home to nearly one-half of the Jews in today's world. You are a champion of their cause in an increasingly anti-Semitic age. The stream of righteousness and morality still flows with enough current from Maine to California to water the nation. The flower of truth yet blooms from cool Alaska to subtropical south. There is enough salt in your fifty states to preserve you from catastrophic eclipse. "Be not high-minded, but fear," are words of scriptural admonition. So now my American brethren you have many reasons to stand a little taller, not in arrogant pride, but in humility of spirit for two hundred years of nationhood.

Church News

Honor at New Credit

A handful of members of the Springvale Church were privileged to witness the culmination of one aspect of the career of their retiring pastor and his wife, Paul and Lucie Nigh, the impact of which they had not fully known. Appreciation for long-term relationships built and friendships maintained among the Indian people of New Credit and the Six Nations reservation was celebrated at the New Credit Community Center on Sunday evening, September 14.

Warm feelings flowed as a pot-luck dinner was shared with these people — Mohawks, Chippewas and Tuscaroras. Evidence of strong spiritual bonds between Pastor Nigh and the Indian people was manifest by the expressions of love and appreciation which we heard verbalized by those involved. "He baptized (dedicated) our babies, married our young people, and buried our dead." Memories were vivid not only of Pastor Nigh's relationships with them, but those resulting from the precedent set by his parents, John and Della Nigh.

Appreciation for a life-time of service was symbolized by a plaque from the Mississaugas of New Credit and the Six Nations people. This gift, Pastor Nigh expressed, he would not exchange for one-thousand dollars.

Cedar Grove Exceeds Goal



General Chairman Rufus Lauver is at the speakers' stand. In foreground from right to left: The pastor's wife, Mrs. Eugene Heidler; Bishop Henry Ginder; Mrs. Ginder; and Rev. Alvin Burkholder.

The Cedar Grove congregation has raised \$101,465 in gifts and pledges toward the building of a new sanctuary.

The Kick-off Loyalty Dinner was held November 25 with over 250 people attending. Speakers at the dinner were Bishop Henry Ginder, Bishop Charlie Byers and Rev. Alvin Burkholder. A goal

of \$100,000 was set for the Fund Raising Campaign.

At the Victory Celebration on November 29, the congregation rejoiced that the goal had been reached and passed.

Plans are being made to break ground in March for the new sanctuary. Rev. Eugene Heidler is the pastor.

CONFERENCES

Allegheny

The Carlisle congregation began a Lay Evangelism Program on Thursday evening, Jan. 15, with a Kick-Off Dinner. The program will last through April 8. Rev. Walter Winger is the pastor.

The Hollowell congregation hosted a hymn sing for the Waynesboro and the Paramount congregations on Sunday evening, Nov. 30. An offering was taken and used to purchase hymnals for the Van Lear Church. Rev. Kenneth Engle is the pastor at Hollowell.

On Sunday, Dec. 14, Bishop Henry A. Ginder spoke to the Martinsburg congregation on "The Faithful Brethren in Christ." The pastor is Rev. Robert Keller, Sr.

The Waynesboro congregation received ten persons into church membership on Sunday, Dec. 21. The pastor is Rev. Virgil Books.

Atlantic

The NAE film, "Africa, Dry Edge of Disaster," was shown to the Manor congregation on Sunday evening, Dec. 28. Rev. John B. Hawbaker is the pastor.

Sixteen persons were received into church membership recently by the Refton congregation. The pastor is Rev. Dale Allison.

The Souderton congregation received twenty-three persons into church fellowship on Sunday, Dec. 14. A fellowship tea was held following the morning worship for the new members. Rev. John Byers is the pastor.

Canadian

An Ordination Service was held on Sunday, Dec. 7, in the Falls View Church for the pastor, Rev. Robert Climenhaga. Rev. and Mrs. C. C. Boschnan, Mrs. Climenhaga's parents, were present and Rev. Boschnan shared in the service.

The Wainfleet congregation recently held a "Tithing Demonstration Sunday." The total offering received was over \$3,000. Rev. Roy Peterman is the pastor.

Central

The Carland Zion congregation held a Love Feast and Communion Service on New Year's Eve. The pastor is Rev. Eric Stanton.

The choir and bell choir of the Fairview congregation gave a Christmas concert in the Salem Shopping Mall in Dayton on Saturday evening, Dec. 20. The choirs were under the direction of Vernon Martin, Jr. Rev. Henry N. Miller is the pastor.

The Fairview congregation held an Open House in honor of Anna Cassel's 90th birthday on Sunday afternoon, Nov. 9.

The Pleasant Hill congregation heard Tom Tomsic, representative of Lay Witness Ministries, on Sunday morning, Jan. 18. Rev. Glenn A. Hensel is the pastor.

Midwest

A carry-in dinner was held by the Dallas Center congregation on Sunday, Dec. 7, in honor of Frank Casler's 80th birthday.



Pacific

Bishop Donald Shafer held a Consecration Service, December 28, for newly elected deacon couple, Mr. and Mrs. Jake Stern, of the Ontario congregation. The pastor is Rev. Jerel Book.

Births

Helfrick: David Barton, born Oct. 4, to Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Helfrick, Waynesboro congregation, Pa.

Simmers: Travis Lee, born Sept. 12, to Mr. and Mrs. David Simmers, Waynesboro congregation, Pa.

Snyder: Dawn Marie born November 22 to Mr. and Mrs. Lonnie Snyder, Cedar Grove congregation, Pa.

Wenger: Laura Renee, born Sept. 23, to Mr. and Mrs. Carl Wenger, Waynesboro congregation, Pa.

Weddings

Deiter-Herman: Dorothy Irene Herman and Edward William Deiter, Jr., Harrisburg, Pa., Dec. 22, in the Hummelstown Brethren in Christ Church, with Rev. Andrew Slagenweit officiating.

Elam-Schmucker: Lorita Rae, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Isaac Schmucker, Marengo, Ind., and Rev. George Maynard Elam, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jesse A. Harmon, Macon, Ga., Sept. 6, in the Presbyterian Seminary Chapel, Louisville, Ky., with Rev. Larry Burgess and Rev. Isaac Schmucker, father of the bride, officiating.

Foltz-Strawser: Susan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Palmer Strawser, Cocolamus, Pa., and Robert, son of Mrs. Olive Foltz, Mifflintown, Pa., November 22, in the Cedar Grove Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Eugene Heidler officiating.

Goering-Kauffman: Linda Jane, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy J. Kauffman, Hutchinson, Kansas, and Jay R., son of J. Hobart Goering, Moundridge, Kansas, September 6, in the Yoder Mennonite Church, Rev. Walter Neufelt officiating.

Kerr-Derstine: Betty Derstine, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Curtis Bergey, and Rodney, son of Mr. and Mrs. Wilmer Kerr, Souderton, Pa., Aug. 2, in the home of the bride with the bride's father officiating.

Lerch-Rohrer: Barbara Ann Rohrer and Joseph Michael Lerch, Hummelstown, Pa., Dec. 20, in the Hummelstown Brethren in Christ Church, with Rev. Andrew Slagenweit officiating.

Musser-Fisher: Carol Ann Fisher, Pottsville, Pa., and Kenneth D. Musser, Mechanicsburg, Pa., Aug. 23, in the Dillsburg Brethren in Christ Church.

Reese-Miller: Heidi Jean, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Henry N. Miller, Englewood, Ohio, and Paul R., son of Rev. and Mrs. Robert Reese, Williamsport, Pa., Dec. 27, in the Fairview Brethren in Christ Church (Englewood, Ohio), with the fathers of the couple and Rev. David Reese, brother of the groom, officiating.

Tice-Schindler: Bonnie Schindler, State College, Pa., and Carl, son of Mr. and Mrs. Russell Tice, Spring Mills, Pa., July 26, in the Green Grove Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Robert Shanklin officiating.

Weller-Knutti: Elaine A., daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Knutti, and Larry E., son of Mr. and Mrs. David Weller, Sr., both of North Lawrence, Ohio, Dec. 27, in the Sippo Valley Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Eli Hostetler officiating.

Obituaries

Doner: Edith M. Doner, born July 24, 1913, died Dec. 21, 1975, in the Bethany Village Retirement Home, Mechanicsburg, Pa. She is survived by two sisters: Mrs. Myra Brauen and Mrs. Luella D. Wenger. She was a member of the Mechanicsburg Brethren in Christ Church where the funeral service was held. Rev. John N. Hostetter and Rev. C. R. Burgard officiated. Interment was in the Mechanicsburg Cemetery.

Grove: Mrs. Anna Arlene Grove, born March 14, 1917, died Oct. 23, 1975, in a Visalia, Calif. hospital. She was married to Rev. Arthur Grove, who survives. She is also survived by a son: Darrell; a daughter, Shirley; three brothers; and a sister. She was a member of the Waukena Brethren in Christ Church. Funeral services were held in the First Church of God, Waukena, and in the Montgomery Brethren in Christ Church. A eulogy was given by the president of the Corcoran Ministerial Association in memory of her. Interment was in the Montgomery Cemetery.

Thompson: Mrs. Myrtle S. Thompson died Nov. 26, 1975, in Hummelstown, Pa., at 70 years of age. She is survived by her husband, Howard L.; two sons; three daughters; sixteen grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; and four sisters. The funeral service was held in the Trefz Funeral Home, Hummelstown, with Rev. Andrew Slagenweit officiating.

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GOD IS NOT A RELUCTANT JUDGE

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The petition, of course, is not the only kind of prayer. Some people think that it is. These individuals are like the little boy who was asked if he prayed every day. He answered, "No. Some days I don't need anything." But there is far more to prayer than asking for things. Some people are always praying. They have learned the secret of continued communication with God. Occasionally someone has asked me, "Have you prayed about it?" If they mean, have I been on my knees uttering words, the answer would have to be "No." But if they mean, "Has something within you been going out to God from the moment the need, or issue, was brought to your attention?" my reply would be an emphatic "Yes!" You see, prayer is more than uttering words. You can pray when you do not think you are praying. You can pray with no words at all. Many have discovered that their deepest prayers, and hence the largest part of their prayer life, does not involve words at all. Prayer is basically the urge of the life toward God. It is the flow of something within towards the Lord. It is above words. Sometimes it is beyond words. It is the type of constant communication which makes "prayer without ceasing" a reality.

This is not as mysterious as it may sound. Someone has defined thinking as "talking to yourself." We can do the same with God. Instead of talking things over with ourselves without words, we simply talk things over with God without words. And it can become a habit of life.

Now let's consider some things about *wrong prayer*.

Christians in one city once requested acquaintances in another city to pray for a sick friend. Later, however, they telephoned to say, "You had better stop what you're doing because the patient is getting worse." Obviously, someone was doing some incorrect praying.

I recall a day of prayer I once attended. The aim of the gathering of pastors was to fast and pray for an entire day. We began in the early morning. We continued until two or three in the afternoon. By that time the atmosphere had become so heavy and so negative that one of our number finally said, "I'm going to leave. I must be a Jonah or something, because this has been terrible. We had more faith when we started than we have now, and we've been praying for hours." Then someone else said, "This is true. I've been listening to the prayers. They are all negative. We have been complaining and begging. It's all on the wrong level. The implication is that we are all pastors who

know what ought to be done, and we are informing God of it, and then begging Him to do it. We must change our praying. We must begin to praise God for knowing, caring, hearing, and wanting to help."

Well, that group of men did change their praying, and immediately everything became bright. Before we left, men were back in faith. By the time the meeting broke up they had really been blessed. In fact, blessings for other places came out of that gathering as well.

It is possible to pray ourselves into holes. But if we have the right conception of God, we will never do it. If we refuse to see God as a stubborn magistrate who needs to have an arm twisted, we will be praying ourselves *out of holes* and into blessing. Prayer is, after all, "wishing forward" in the direction of the heavenly Father. Every detail of our lives can be mastered by that persistent, ever-present Godward urge. Prayer is desiring the ultimate. It is the desire for God's kingdom to come. The desire for more spiritual life. The desire to become strong, to see spiritual awakening.

Remember when Elijah bent down before God and began to give Him the latest news about the unfaithfulness of Israel? Recall how he informed God that he was the only loyal servant God had left in the whole nation? If you have read about Elijah's terrible negative prayer meeting, then you undoubtedly know what God did to straighten him out. "Elijah," He said, "you are all wrong. There are still no less than seven thousand who have never bowed their knees to Baal." Then the Almighty took him to a mountain and gave him a memorable demonstration of the importance of listening to the still small voice of God, which would keep his perspective right and keep him assured of God's concerned presence in the affairs of men.

When we get before the Lord, let us not give Him the latest bad news from planet earth. He already knows everything which is going on. Let us not announce to Him what we are sure He must do. Let's take time to listen to His revelation of what we ought to be praying about. Then, having discovered what His wishes are, let us approach Him confidently. His promises are all in force. His good will toward us has never altered. His love has not flagged. He does not need to be convinced or persuaded. He only needs to be praised and believed.

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